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STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

WA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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December 4, 2006

Craig McLaughlin, Executive Director
Washington State Board of Health
PO Box 47990
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

Dear Mr. McLaughlin:

The Department of Health (DOH) has reviewed Mr. Steven Wilt's recent petition to the State Board of Health requesting that Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) be added as a notifiable condition in Washington State. We sympathize with Mr. Wilt over the loss of his wife; CJD is a terrible disease.

CJD is a form of prion disease and includes both classic CJD and variant CJD, associated with bovine spongiform encephalopathy. As you know, the State Board of Health is authorized to designate additional diseases as notifiable conditions by amending WAC 246-101 but we do not recommend it at this time. Less than 300 incidences of CJD occur in the United States every year. In Washington, CJD should already be reported under the existing requirement to report rare diseases of public health significance, per WAC 246-101-010(31). Next time the SBOH opens the rules regarding notifiable conditions, we think they should consider adding prion disease to the list, but we do not recommend opening the rules now.

Sincerely,

Jude Van Buren, DrPH, MPH, RN, RS
Assistant Secretary
Epidemiology, Health Statistics and Public Health Laboratories

cc: Ned Therien, State Board of Health
Michelle Davis, Department of Health
Pamela Lovinger, Department of Health